



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

May 5, 2020

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The Honorable Kate Brown  
Governor of Oregon  
State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97310

Dear Governor Brown,

I know we share a common commitment to do all we can to make sure our local governments are not left out of the equation when funds provided to the state for unbudgeted, COVID-19-related expenses. In my regular conversations with county commissioners, mayors, councilors and special district leaders, it is clear that they have unbudgeted, COVID-19-related costs and they are in definite need of financial assistance.

Governor, as you and I have discussed, while the funds Congress made available to states cannot be used for direct revenue replacement, the Department of Treasury has continued to issue guidance making clear that COVID-related costs borne by local government are eligible for assistance from the state. The latest guidance came out last night and can be found at: <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Coronavirus-Relief-Fund-Frequently-Asked-Questions.pdf>

Importantly, many states—including our neighbors in Washington and Idaho—have already moved forward to make funds available to their local government partners. The governor of Idaho established an advisory committee that recommended, among other things, that \$94 million be set aside on a per-capita basis for each city and county to draw upon for their qualified COVID-related expenses.

Commissioners throughout my district are asking for financial help. Every county faces costs to comply with the state's plan to reopen. If nothing else, these are clearly COVID-related costs of compliance. I write to ask that you and the Emergency Board of the Legislature reconsider the decision to not share funds with local governments, and instead do what other states are already doing to help their local government partners as was intended by Congress when we voted to send states these funds.

Sincerely,

Greg Walden  
Oregon's 2<sup>nd</sup> District  
U.S. Representative

cc: Oregon County Commissioners  
Oregon State Legislators